

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6255

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to improving student performance through student-centered planning.

Brief Description: Improving student performance through student-centered planning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Eide and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/06, 2/22/06 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Encourages each middle school, junior high, and high school to implement a comprehensive guidance and planning program.
- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), from funds appropriated for this purpose, to disseminate the curriculum for the program; disseminate electronic planning and performance monitoring tools; disseminate options for diagnostic assessments; conduct regional training seminars; and allocate implementation grants to schools.
- Requires the SPI to reimburse school districts for diagnostic assessments in 9th grade to enhance guidance and planning for students; this provision is null and void without funding.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Shabro, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The Franklin Pierce School District in Tacoma has developed a comprehensive model of student guidance for middle and high school students called Navigation 101. The Navigation 101 model includes a class that provides students with planning skills, career exploration opportunities, portfolio development, and self-assessment of students' academic accomplishments, interests, abilities, and learning styles. Teachers and students in Navigation 101 classes stay together throughout the students' four-year high school career. Students lead annual conferences with their parents and mentor teacher, during which they explain past performance and make future plans. The district does not set its annual class schedule until students make their course selections. Since implementation of Navigation 101, the district reports a significant increase in parent participation at student conferences; an increase in student requests to enroll in more challenging mathematics and science courses; and improvement in student performance.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has encouraged other school districts to adopt a Navigation 101 model for student guidance. The SPI reports that at least 12 other districts have adopted the model with advice and implementation support from Franklin Pierce. An unknown number of additional schools and districts have implemented one or more aspects of the model, such as student-led conferences or four-year mentor teachers.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Legislature encourages each middle school, junior high, and high school to implement a comprehensive guidance and planning program. The purpose of the program is to:

- support students as they navigate their education and plan their future;
- encourage an ongoing, personal relationship with an adult in the school; and
- involve parents in students' educational decisions and plans.

A comprehensive guidance and planning program is one that contains at least the following components:

- (1) a curriculum that could include analysis of students' test results; assessments of student interests and aptitudes; diagnostic assessments of students' academic strengths and weaknesses; use of assessment results in developing students' plans; goal setting skills; planning for high school course selection; independent living skills; and postsecondary options and how to access them;
- (2) regular meetings with a teacher who serves as the student's advisor throughout their enrollment at the school;
- (3) student-led parent-teacher conferences for the purpose of demonstrating the student's accomplishments, identifying weaknesses, planning and course selection, and long-term goal setting; and
- (4) data collection that allows schools to monitor student's progress.

Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose, the SPI must develop and disseminate the program curriculum to all school districts no later than the beginning of the 2006-07 school year. The SPI must also develop and disseminate electronic student planning tools and a software package to analyze student performance; develop and disseminate options for diagnostic assessments; conduct regional training seminars for teachers; and monitor program implementation during the fall of 2006 in order to revise the curriculum by the spring of 2007.

The SPI must allocate a first round of implementation grants to 25 schools by December 2006, and a second round to 75 schools by January 2007. The purpose of the grants is to provide time for staff to plan and integrate the program into their schools.

Beginning September 1, 2007, the SPI must make diagnostic assessments available to assist school districts. These assessments, in addition to having other characteristics, should allow student progress to be compared across the country and be readily available to parents.

Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, the SPI must reimburse school districts for administering diagnostic assessments in 9th grade for the purpose of identifying academic weaknesses, enhancing student planning and guidance, and developing strategies to assist students before the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning. This provision is null and void without funding in the budget.

By January 1, 2009, the SPI reports to the Legislature on the programs' impact on student performance.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

All middle, junior high, and high schools are encouraged to implement a comprehensive guidance and planning program. In addition to other activities, the SPI is directed to disseminate electronic student planning tools, a software package to analyze student performance, and options for diagnostic assessments. If funds are available, the SPI must distribute a first round of 25 implementation grants to school districts by September 2006, and a second round of 75 grants by January 2007. The underlying bill called for an unspecified number of grants by December 2006. A reference is removed to SPI rules that require grant recipients to make every effort to ensure capacity in the courses selected by students. An expiration date of July 1, 2009, is removed. The bill is no longer null and void without funding in the budget.

Beginning September 1, 2007, the SPI must make diagnostic assessments available to assist school districts. Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, the SPI must reimburse school districts for administering diagnostic assessments in 9th grade. This provision is null and void without funding in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, Section 4, relating to reimbursing school districts for 9th grade diagnostic assessments, is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: It is important to build relationships between students and adults in high schools, and preferably also in middle schools. This helps students see the rigor and relevance of their coursework and builds ties with parents. It provides a framework without dictating a particular program. The focus should stay on the "mentor" relationship; this is not about counseling. Counseling requires particular certification and other requirements. Implementation takes time, so funding is very important. High school is a critical time for parents to be engaged in their students' lives and plans, even though it is a difficult time. The most important aspects of the program are the curriculum and the relationships.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Gary King, Washington Education Association; Don Rash, Association of Washington School Principals; Mary Kenfield, Washington Parent Teacher Association; and Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.